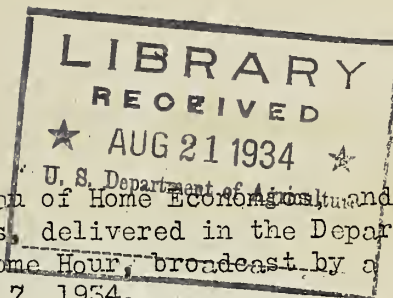


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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

Peaches for Canning



An interview between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. Wells A. Sherman, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 50 associate NBC stations, Tuesday, August 7, 1934.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Two or three days ago, I got a market tip about peaches, especially Georgia peaches, and Carolina peaches. So I went down and asked our friend Mr. Wells Sherman in the Bureau of Agricultural Economics to come up here with me today and give us the latest news on the peach crop. All right, Mr. Sherman, how about it?

MR. SHERMAN: Well, Miss Van Deman, if we'd set aside this date long ago for a peach talk, we couldn't have struck it better. Last Friday and Saturday some 855 cars and I can't tell you how many trucks rolled out of Georgia and the Carolinas loaded with peaches. Those were big days for shipments from the Southern Atlantic peach belt.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Well, if those peaches started north last Friday and Saturday, they're in our markets here in Washington and in Philadelphia, and New York, and Boston today, aren't they?

MR. SHERMAN: Yes, this week is the peak of the season for peaches in the retail markets of the East and the Middle West. The peaches on sale in St. Louis, and Chicago, and Detroit, and Cleveland, and the other big cities of the Middle West come from Tennessee and the Southern Ozarks. Yes, Miss Van Deman, we struck it just right on the crop from all this peach belt starting in Georgia and the Carolinas and going straight west to the Rockies. Yes, and in some of the mountain valleys in Colorado also. There's a real crop out there this year and when those Colorado peaches start to move to market, they move right along. Fruit ripens fast in that climate.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Mr. Sherman, what variety are most of these peaches on the market now? Elberta?

MR. SHERMAN: Yes, Elberta has come to be our greatest commercial peach for shipping fresh. It's a yellow peach, and a freestone, the flesh fairly firm, and the skin not too tender. The peach is of course a delicate fruit at best and must have careful handling to get it to market free from bruises. The Elberta meets all the requirements better than almost any other variety. The largest peach orchard in the world has 90 percent Elberta trees.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Where is it, this largest peach orchard in the world?

MR. SHERMAN: Down in southwest Arkansas in the Ozarks. It's said to be about 2,500 acres. I haven't visited it myself but I want to sometime.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Must be a great sight at blossom time in the spring. Well, Mr. Sherman, you haven't mentioned prices yet. About what are these Georgia and Carolina peaches selling for here in the east?

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MR. SHERMAN: They're been running from \$2 to \$2.50 a bushel basket for U. S. No. 1, depending on the size of the fruit. I can't give you retail prices, because they aren't reported to us. Most of the Georgia peaches are shipped according to U. S. grades with the minimum size stated. The 2-inch peaches - that is, 2 inches in diameter - are selling at \$2 a bushel wholesale. The 2-1/4 inch fruit at \$2.25 a bushel, and the 2-1/2 inch fruit at \$2.50. Some of the larger retailers are selling for about 25 cents more a bushel.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Well, I never heard of a neater correlation between size and price. Two-inch peaches - \$2 a bushel. Two-and-a-quarter-inch peaches, two dollars and a quarter. Two-and-a-half-inch peaches, two dollars and a half. It certainly must pay those growers to sell their peaches by size and grade, and it certainly helps us consumers to know that we're getting fruit all of the same size. That's a great advantage, especially when we're buying a bushel basket for canning. I take it, Mr. Sherman, you think this is the time to buy peaches for home canning this year.

MR. SHERMAN: Yes, very decidedly. The price can't improve from the consumer's standpoint. On the Washington wholesale market the price for the best dropped to \$2.25 a bushel this morning. There are more peaches in the market right now than there will be again this year. The northern peach crop is almost a total failure. The extreme cold last winter in western New York State, for instance, ruined all chances of a crop up there. In fact, there's serious question about the trees themselves. So no use to hold back on your canning, waiting for northern peaches this year. Oh, there may be a few scattering bushels here and there, but commercially speaking there is no peach crop north of central Virginia and a line running west from there.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Except in California, I suppose.

MR. SHERMAN: Oh, yes. I wasn't thinking of the California clings. Most of them go right from the orchards to commercial canneries and come east to use in tin cans during the winter. There's a marketing agreement covering all that this year, and the canners will put up all the California peaches that they think they can dispose of.

Now, Miss Van Deman, let me ask you a question or two.

MISS VAN DEMAN: All right, Mr. Sherman. Turn about is fair play.

MR. SHERMAN: How do you advise people to can peaches at home nowadays?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Well, we recommend processing the peaches in glass jars or tin cans in a boiling water bath. Of course, the first step is to peel the peaches and halve them and discard the pits. Some people like to pack the raw halves, pit side down in overlapping layers in the jars, fill them up with boiling hot sirup, and then process. If the peaches are good and firm and not over-ripe, you can get an even better pack if you simmer them first for a few minutes in an open kettle, and pack them hot into the jars. Then fill up the jars with a combination of peach juice and sugar sirup. After packing in the jars, peaches need processing for about 15 minutes in the water bath, counting time after the water begins to boil.

MR. SHERMAN: How many quarts of canned peaches do you get on an average from a bushel of good sound fruit?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Let me see, I'll have to do a little figuring. It generally takes from 2 to 2-1/2 pounds of raw peaches to yield a quart of canned peaches. How much does a bushel of fresh peaches weigh?

MR. SHERMAN: About 50 pounds, a little more than apples. Pits are heavier than cores.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Then counting for the loss in skins and pits, a bushel of good peaches should yield -- let me see -- oh, somewhere around 20 quarts of canned fruit.

MR. SHERMAN: I suppose you have printed directions for canning peaches to send to any homemaker who wants them.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes indeed. Directions for canning peaches and for making peach pickles and peach preserves and peach butter. I'll be glad to send directions for all these ways of putting up peaches for next winter, to anybody who writes to me. Just address your requests to me at the Bureau of Home Economics in Washington.

Now, Mr. Sherman, I'm going to turn the tables back on you again. What's the situation on grapes? I've noticed some kinds on the market already.

MR. SHERMAN: Yes, grapes always follow hard on the heels of the peaches. The news on grapes is good. There are lots of grapes in the Ozarks - a fine crop. And New York and Michigan have good crops.

MISS VAN DEMAN: The hard winter didn't hurt the grapes then?

MR. SHERMAN: No. Grape buds aren't formed until spring. They're different from peaches and apples. Their fruit buds are set in the late summer and fall for the next year's crop. If a hard freeze kills them in the winter or spring, it's goodbye fruit until the next year. But grape clusters come on wood that grows during the spring, so cold weather rarely hurts them.

MISS VAN DEMAN: What about table grapes from California?

MR. SHERMAN: Looks as though there'd be as many as ever. Thompson Seedless are coming along now.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Delicious, too, those seedless grapes when they're fully ripe. If I buy them green I always keep them till they turn that lovely pale gold color. Then they're sweeter.

MR. SHERMAN: Well, if they're sweeter, it's because some of the water has evaporated. You know grapes don't manufacture any more sugar after they're separated from the vines. Anyway, Thompson Seedless is a good table grape. But of course to many tastes there's nothing like our eastern slip-skins such as Concord.

MISS VAN DEMAN: You're right. They have the rich grape flavor. Well it's good news we'll have plenty of them this year to eat raw and to make into juice and jelly.

And thank you, Mr. Sherman, for coming up and especially for giving us news about peaches. It's mighty helpful to know that now is the time to buy the best peaches for the least money.

And goodbye, Everybody, for this time.